

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
Regular Meeting

Thursday, June 26, 2008

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Kittredge School, Hinsdale, MA on Thursday, June 26, 2008, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes, L. Chivers, Farley, Goddard, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, Yates, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: Members J. Chivers and Gordon.

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Manager Marge Foster, CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling, Recording Secretary Mary Jo Keiper, and Members of the Audience.

For the record, Chair Carroll-Lombardi does not vote unless noted.

ARTICLE 9474 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Dalton Police Chief John Bartels addressed the Committee regarding the proposed hiring of a Dean of Students at Wahconah in place of the current Resource Officer. He talked about funding for the position and whether or not the dean of students could perform the same functions as the resource officer. The draft job description for the new position, which will fall under the teachers' contract, was distributed. The Chief stated it was still his hope the School Resource Officer could continue at Wahconah.

Dalton Selectman Bill Chabot referred to the failed override vote in Dalton, noting many towns in the Commonwealth are struggling with school budgets. He indicated the district's budget is \$5,000,000 over what it should be, according to the Department of Education. He suggested the problem is a trend and will continue in coming years. He asked that the Committee meet with town leadership in planning for the FY-2010 budget and offered Dalton's assistance in setting future budgets. The Chair thanked Mr. Chabot and offered to meet with town officials as often as necessary. She also mentioned an email she had received and would forward to all members regarding the hidden consequences of capping property taxes.

Member Farley questioned Mr. Chabot regarding his reference to the \$5,000,000. The Chair will look at the DOE website. Member Henderson believed the number was related to the Foundation Budget figures. Member Bantjes noted Becket passed an override three years ago.

ARTICLE 9475 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

There was no student present.

ARTICLE 9476 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of June 12, 2008

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 12, 2008, as printed.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9477 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-49, in the total amount of \$3,783,344.47, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-49, dated June 26, 2008

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$170,311.29	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$320,476.68</u>	
		\$490,787.97
Transfers		\$76,905.03
Federal Funds		\$12,451.45
Medicaid		\$3,999.55
Circuit Breaker		\$17,048.95
School Lunch		\$25,563.74
NRMS Student Activity Fund		\$3,982.09
WRHS Student Fees Revolving		\$1,435.76
WRHS Girls' Soccer Revolving		\$637.86
WRHS Cross Country Revolving		\$500.00
WRHS Softball Revolving		\$1,874.50
WRHS Baseball Revolving		\$1,503.75
WRHS Tennis Revolving		\$836.50
WRHS Boys' Track Revolving		\$2,480.00
WRHS Girls' Track Revolving		\$622.50
WRHS Hockey Revolving		\$200.00
2008 Scholarships		\$27,650.00
Maturing Debt - Principal Kittredge		\$2,450,000.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Kittredge		\$36,104.33
Loan Fees - Kittredge		\$27,500.00
RAN's		\$600,000.00
Interest on Temporary Loans		<u>\$1,260.49</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$3,783,344.47

Member Bantjes pointed out that \$2.45 million of the total was for paying off the Kittredge loan.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-50, in the total amount of \$730,136.67, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-50, dated June 26, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$521,363.25
Becket Preschool Revolving	\$2,110.42
Berkshire Trail Preschool Revolving	\$1,796.23
School Lunch	\$21,823.49
Federal Funds	<u>\$42,699.25</u>
Sub-total	\$589,792.64
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$6,628.15</u>
Total Payroll	\$596,420.79
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$133,715.88</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$730,136.67

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper and Welts.

Motion carried.

MOVE BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-51, in the total amount of \$2,072,087.09, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-51, dated June 30, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$1,421,226.88
Berkshire Trail Preschool Revolving	\$7,184.94
Federal Funds	<u>\$15,007.15</u>
Sub-total	\$1,443,418.97
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$15,015.09</u>
Total Payroll	\$1,458,434.06
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$613,653.03</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$2,072,087.09

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper and Welts.

Motion carried.

B. Authorization for the Treasurer to Borrow Money in Fiscal Year 2009

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES.

That the District Treasurer is hereby authorized, under the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 16(g) as amended by Chapter 134 of the Acts of 1972, and with the approval of the Chair of the District Committee, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008, and to issue a note or notes therefor, payable within one year, and to renew any note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 17.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9478 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

The Chair has invited Senator Ben Downing and Representative Denis Guyer to attend any of the next four regularly scheduled meetings. Member Hopper noted it is a particularly good time to meet with these legislators regarding what the Committee/State is going to do about education.

ARTICLE 9479 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education

There was not report.

2. Finance

Member Chivers reported the subcommittee had met just before the school committee meeting. She reviewed the agenda and brought forward the following motions, as well as a recommendation regarding selection of an auditor to be taken up under new business.

The subcommittee also considered the request of the town of Dalton to make an additional appropriation from its E & D account to offset the operating amounts for fiscal year 2009. The subcommittee was unable to recommend that appropriation because the district's excess and deficiency account is currently under 1% and should be 5% of the district's total budget.

a. Bid Award – Electrical Services

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards a bid for electrical services on an as needed basis: up to \$10,000 in one year or up to \$2,500 per incident to the low bidder, County Electrical Contractors, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

Ms. Chivers reported there were seven bidders and County was the lowest. Member Harvey asked if electrical work might be included as a function of the collaborative. Superintendent Harlan said it would be, but the first priority will be special education transportation. She is hopeful the collaborative will be fully operational in FY-2010.

Ayes: Eleven members.

Nays: Member Farley

Motion carried.

b. Bid Award – Plumbing Services

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards a bid for plumbing services on an as needed basis: up to \$10,000 in one year or up to \$2,500 per incident to the low bidder, M & W Heating, Inc., as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.
There were three bidders; M & W was the lowest.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Bid Award – Construction Services

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES.

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards a bid for construction services on an as needed basis: up to \$10,000 in one year or up to \$2,500 per incident to the low bidder, Northeastern Commercial Construction Services, LLC, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

There were only two bids.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Recertification of FY-2009 Capital Budget

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee reduces the FY-2009 capital budget assessment to member municipalities from \$674,807 (adopted on March 6, 2008) to \$650,437, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

The motion is the result of refinancing the Kittredge School bond.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

e. FY-2008 Budget

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee reduces the FY-2008 assessment to member municipalities from \$13,415,025 to \$13,349,405, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

Ms. Chivers stated the district's actual costs are not yet known, but the money is being returned to the towns as done in the past. The \$65,620 will be returned as follows: \$6,279 to Becket, \$2,863 to Cummington, \$35,739 to Dalton, \$9,718 to Hinsdale, \$4,749 to Peru, \$2,368 to Washington, and \$3,904 to Windsor.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

f. Request from Town of Dalton

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER YATES

To deny the request of the town of Dalton that the District make an additional appropriation from its excess and deficiency account to offset the operating amounts for fiscal year 2009, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

The Chair will respond in writing, including the reasons for the denial.

Ayes: Eleven members.

Nays: Member Henderson.

Motion carried.

Member Hopper asked if the district had locked in for next winter's fuel oil. Business Manager Foster stated it had; she will bring the figure to the next meeting.

3. Policy Review

Member Bantjes reported the subcommittee would meet next in Becket on July 24th at 6:30 p.m.

a. Second Reading Policy Adoptions

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 2130: Non-Unit Compensation Review, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Two corrections were made to the first reading document.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 4040: Equal Employment Opportunity, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. First Reading Policy Revision

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading revisions to Appendix B: District By-Laws, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Member Bantjes noted the revisions add more structure and allow adjustment in the order of business at meetings.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Personnel

Member Les reported the subcommittee had met twice and would recommend a motion under new business. The superintendent's evaluation will be brought to the next meeting.

B. Others

1. Wahconah Building Committee

The Chair reported a meeting had been held and that thirteen people have agreed to serve on the building committee for Wahconah. Additional meetings have been set for July 7, 15, and 22, 2008. Minutes of the Wahconah Building Committee meetings will be posted on the district's website. The two openings yet to be filled are those of a town manager and someone with engineering/architectural experience.

2. GIC Committee

Member Welts reported a scheduled meeting had been postponed due to a conflict with Finance Subcommittee.

ARTICLE 9480 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

Superintendent Harlan reported on the STEM initiative, noting the fifth Summit will be held on October 26th. She also listed various emails she had forwarded to the Committee, regarding insurance and Governor Patrick's Readiness Project.

B. Recommendations

1. Dean of Students, Wahconah Regional High School

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorizes the position of Dean of Students at Wahconah Regional High School, effective the 2008-09 school year, such position to be included in the teachers' agreement, with funding to come from the budget line item for School Resource Officer, as recommended by the Superintendent.

Superintendent Harlan invited Wahconah Assistant Principal Martin Phillips to address the Committee regarding her recommendation to create the position of Dean of Students at the high school, noting the position had been discussed often in both finance and education subcommittees.

Mr. Phillips stated he came to the Committee with mixed emotions. He has always supported the school resource officer; however, the year just ended has been an especially difficult one for the assistant principal. He distributed a letter of justification for the position, highlighting the high number of disciplinary incidents, the need for his attendance at special education meetings, the number of external and internal suspensions and the severity of the infractions.

The administration has looked at various ways to have both a resource officer and a dean of students. Scheduling has made it impossible to have each position half-time and the budget will not support two full-time positions. The dean of students will help stabilize investigative demands, can fully participate in the processing of disciplinary issues, and will provide another visible person in authority on the campus.

The Committee discussed the differences in the two positions, reviewing the job description for the dean of students. It was noted the community supports the RSO; Wahconah will have three very large classes next year; the position of dean of students will be a teaching position, with salary and benefits covered by that contract; the ideal situation would be to have both positions.

The Chair acknowledged it had been difficult for Mr. Phillips to come before the Committee, understanding his tremendous respect for the resource officer at the high school. She stated she would support the recommendation because of his support of the recommendation of the Superintendent.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members L. Chivers, Farley, Goddard, Grallert, Harvey, Les, Welts, Yates, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: Members Bantjes, Henderson, Hopper, Morton.

Motion carried.

C. Other – None.

ARTICLE 9481 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

The following personnel changes were noted. All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

- Deborah Wetherell has been appointed to the position of Secretary to the Principal at Wahconah Regional High School, effective on or about October 1, 2008. (Mrs. Wetherell is currently Secretary to the Principal at Kittredge School.)
- Thomas Keefe has been appointed physical education/wellness teacher at Berkshire Trail Elementary and Kittredge Schools, effective August 28, 2008, at step A-4.
- Mary Cherry, mathematics teacher at Nessacus Regional Middle School, initially appointed August 28, 2003, has resigned effective July 1, 2008.
- Brian Gilman has been appointed grade 4 teacher at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, effective August 28, 2008, at step B-6.
- Gisel Cahoon has been appointed grade 1 teacher at Kittredge School, effective January 5, 2009, at step A-1.
- Kimberly Clayton has been appointed kindergarten teacher at Craneville School, effective August 28, 2008, at step B-8. (Ms. Clayton is currently teaching half-time grade 1 at Craneville.)
- Amelia Ahlen has been appointed grade 2 teacher at Becket Washington School, effective August 28, 2008, at Step A-1.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To move Article 9482, Old Business, to follow Remarks for the Good of the Committee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9483 NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the addition of new business to the agenda.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Request from Mr. & Mrs. Carlton Dodge

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER LES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee allows Mr. & Mrs. Carlton Dodge to change the primary policy-holder for their group retiree health insurance at the next available open enrollment, as recommended by the Personnel Subcommittee.

Member Les explained the reason for the Dodge's request. Mr. Dodge retired after 1994 and is the policy holder; Mrs. Dodge retired before 1994 and would be eligible for the lower premium split. The vote of the Committee will constitute a "qualifying event" for a change in policy holder.

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: Member Hopper.

Abstention: Member Farley.

Motion carried.

B. Kittredge School Improvement Plan

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER FARLEY

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the School Improvement Plan for 2008-2009 for Kittredge School, as recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Member Bantjes noted this is the last school improvement plan in the series. It had been returned to Kittredge for corrections, which were now made.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Appointment of Auditor

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee secures the audit services of Thomas J. Scanlon, CPA, and Associates for FY-2008, FY-2009, and FY-2010, based on their quote dated June 4, 2008 and the recommendation of the Finance Subcommittee.

The finance subcommittee recommended the second lowest bid: \$17,400 in fiscal years 2008 and 2009; \$17,900 in fiscal year 2010. Scanlon and Associates has a very good track record and is well respected by the Department of Revenue. The difference between their bid and the lowest was \$200.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9484 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Hopper commented on the Craneville grade 5 step-up ceremony. The school recognized many volunteers at the event, including one who is 93 years old.

Member Goddard expressed her appreciation to all those Committee members who had attended the various graduations and step-up ceremonies.

Member Henderson reported retiring Craneville teacher Beverly Favreau will return next year as a volunteer and has set up a small interior “office” for herself. Students in her class, including Mrs. Henderson’s son, made a canvas window for the new office.

Member Farley had attended the 8th grade graduation of his grandson and commented on that very nice event at Nessacus.

Superintendent Harlan reported the torn flag at Kittredge would be taken care of by Principal David Kotowski.

ARTICLE 9482 OLD BUSINESS

A. Executive Session (Strategy Regarding Negotiations)

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER GRALLERT

To go into executive session at 8:38 p.m. in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B, “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining...”

The Chair stated the Committee would return to open session for the purpose of adjournment.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Bantjes, L. Chivers, Farley, Goddard, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, Yates, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 9:15 p.m.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER YATES

To adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.